Dear Michiganders,

For the past seven months, I have been making tough decisions that took us from the state with the 3rd highest cases of COVID-19 per million in March and April, to the 33rd highest in September. We have one of the strongest economic recoveries in the nation too. Our actions have undoubtedly saved thousands of lives. But after the Republican Legislature sued to take away my executive authority, this past Friday the Michigan Supreme Court struck down the statute under which I issued executive orders to save lives and protect Michigan families, frontline workers, and small businesses.

As a result of the Court's action and the legislative leadership's reckless indifference to controlling this virus, there will be uncertainty, disruption, and possibly greater risk to our economy, with more people quarantined, and more deaths. But the ruling does not mean all of the protections we have put in place will go away. My administration has additional powers that I will use to protect our families from the spread of this virus.

Under Michigan law, if the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) director determines that control of an epidemic is necessary to protect public health, the director may prohibit the gathering of people for any purpose and may establish procedures to be followed during the epidemic to insure continuation of essential public health services and enforcement of health laws.

MDHHS Director Robert Gordon has issued several new Epidemic Orders which sustain rules that have protected Michiganders' lives for months, including:

- Limiting the size of indoor and outdoor gatherings
- Requiring masks at non-residential gatherings, including in businesses, government offices, and schools outside of Region 6
- Closing common areas of bars and restaurants
- Requiring masks while playing organized sports, except when swimming or when able to consistently maintain six feet of social distance
- Requiring K-12 schools to issue public notifications of probable and confirmed cases of COVID-19
- Temporarily restricting entry into congregate care and juvenile justice facilities
- Requiring protections in residential care facilities
- See the full list of Epidemic Orders here

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention advises that wearing masks and practicing safe physical distancing are crucial to slow the spread of the virus, protect our frontline workers, and keep our schools and small businesses open. Michiganders, please take this virus seriously by wearing a mask when you go out, washing your hands, and maintaining six feet of physical distance. Get a flu shot. Taking this action is essential to keeping our small businesses and schools open. COVID-19 continues to ravage our country and communities. It didn't stop being a threat because of the court's ruling, or because we've tired of it, or because the legislature left town.

Let us not squander the sacrifices we have made to get to this critical point. We all have to do our part. I am committed to using all the tools at my disposal to protect the lives of Michiganders, and you have the power to save lives too just by taking simple actions to stay safe.

We are all in this together, and we will get through this.